



Hon Kate Jones MP
Member for Ashgrove



**Queensland
Government**

**Minister for Climate Change
and Sustainability**

Ref: BNE No.30428-11
CTS No. 13567/09 and 14348/09

07 DEC 2009

Mr Neil Laurie
The Clerk of the Parliament
Parliament House
Cnr Alice and George Sts
BRISBANE QLD 4000

Dear Mr Laurie

I refer to your letter of 12 November 2009 to the Honourable Tim Mulherin MP, Minister for Primary Industries, Fisheries and Rural and Regional Queensland concerning petition numbers 1268-09 and 1342-09 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 10 and 11 November 2009. Your letter has been forwarded to me for direct reply.

I also thank you for your letter of 26 November 2009 concerning petition number 1355-09 received by the Queensland Legislative Assembly on 25 November 2009.

The three petitions are in relation to the new zoning arrangements for the Moreton Bay Marine Park. These new zoning arrangements aim to protect the marine park's biodiversity and unique values, while minimising the impacts on the thousands of different people who enjoy and use the area. This biodiversity includes fish, but also includes an extensive range of other species including the iconic turtles, dugong, dolphins, wader birds and corals living in the marine park.

The zoning plan review was guided by rigorous scientific and technical expertise. The former Environmental Protection Agency, now part of the Department of Environment and Resource Management, engaged a scientific Expert Advisory Panel to ensure the scientific integrity of the marine park zoning plan review. The Panel provided a series of recommendations for incorporation into the zoning plan, including a set of 13 scientific guiding principles, habitat types and an analysis method to provide adequate protection of the marine park's biodiversity.

These guiding principles indicated that at least 10 percent of each of the 16 broad scale habitat types within the marine park should be included in marine national park (green) zones which prevent all forms of extractive use, direct disposal into the area, coastal development and most maritime infrastructure. This includes all forms of recreational fishing.

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More than 200 data sets that were collated and analysed and responses from over 8,000 submissions were used to develop the final zoning plan. Details of the review process can be found in the *Final Public Benefit Test report for the Marine Parks (Moreton Bay) Zoning Plan 2008* on the Department of Environment and Resource Management's website at <http://www.derm.qld.gov.au/register/p02763aa.pdf>.

Queenslanders have long recognised that national parks on the land are places where natural environments thrive and species multiply without threatening impacts. Green zones are no different and provide the marine equivalent to terrestrial national parks. They are, however, only one of the initiatives to protect the biodiversity of Moreton Bay. There are also many state and local government initiatives to improve the quality of the water flowing into the marine park and to regulate the types of activities that can occur on the land adjacent to the marine park.

A \$2.5 million, five year monitoring program, has being developed to assess the effectiveness of marine park zoning on commercial and recreational fish species, the effectiveness of go slow zones in reducing impacts on turtles and dugongs and the economic implications of the revised marine park. The department has partnered with the best available experts from CSIRO, Griffith University, University of Queensland and state agencies to implement this comprehensive monitoring program.

The monitoring program has already highlighted the importance of the green zones that existed under the previous zoning plan as havens for fish and crabs. Three catch-and-release surveys conducted since August 2008 have found there were more and bigger fish and mud crabs (including more legal size male mud crabs) within the newly established original green zones compared with unrestricted areas. This includes fish and crabs within the Tripcony Bight green zone in Pumicestone Passage – an area that has only been fished by recreational anglers since it was closed to commercial fishers in 1995. This finding highlights the impact that small catches by large numbers of recreational anglers can make, with the recreational harvest by Queensland anglers exceeding the commercial catch for many species like bream, whiting, snapper, tailor and flathead.

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. If any further information is required, please do not hesitate to contact Michael Dart of my office on telephone 3239 0844.

Yours sincerely



Kate Jones MP
Minister for Climate Change and Sustainability